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*In Memoriam*

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JOHN WESLEY POWELL

HONORARY MEMBER

OF THE

AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY

BORN MARCH 24, 1834  
DIED SEPTEMBER 23, 1902

JOHN WESLEY POWELL, 1834-1902.

JOHN WESLEY POWELL, one of the most eminent men of science America has yet produced, died September 23, 1902, at his summer home in the State of Maine, aged sixty-eight years. Born the son of a Methodist minister at Mount Morris, N. Y., he had lived by the time he was fifteen in three other States of the Union, — Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois. The itinerancy of the clergyman bred in him that roving disposition which, at its best, fosters, if it does not create, the naturalist and the scientific investigator. But two years after attaining his majority he went down the Mississippi alone in a skiff from the Falls of St. Anthony to its mouth, making botanical and other collections, which are still to be found in the museums of the State institutions to which he presented them. In 1856 he rowed from Pittsburg to the mouth of the Ohio, and in 1858 descended the Illinois from Ottawa to the Mississippi. His land trips were also quite remarkable. The rest of his days and nights he spent in attending school and college, and teaching when the opportunity offered, graduating finally at the Ohio Wesleyan University at Bloomington, where he afterwards held for a short time the position of professor of geology and curator of the museum. At the outbreak of the war he enlisted as a private, and rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, declining the commission of colonel offered to him at the close. In the battle of Shiloh he lost his right arm, which did not, however, affect his scientific activity. Many stories are told of his collecting zeal while in the army. In his case it was certainly not, — *inter armis silet scientia*. His military stations were only so many collecting districts. He served in the field of war and in the field of science with equal zeal and skill. Indeed, he is credited with having made the first attempt in America to study geology on the spot, by taking his pupils to the Colorado mountain region, where, with him, they could investigate at first hand phenomena of nature of remarkable grandeur and magnificence. This was in 1867. In 1869, after a reconnaissance expedition the year before, he made with a small party his famous three-months' voyage down the Colorado and its cañon which, among other things, led to the survey of the great Colorado valley and adjacent regions.

His experiences in the West turned his attention to ethnology and to the languages of the American Indians, and besides collecting numerous specimens and material of an anthropological nature for the Smithsonian Institution, he took care that three ethnological volumes were included in the Survey Report. In 1879 by coöperation of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution the material of an anthropological sort collected by the U. S. Geological Survey was handed over to the Smithsonian Institution, and a publication appropriation of \$20,000 made. Thus began "The Contributions to North American Ethnology," of which nine volumes (1877-1893) have been issued containing ethnographic, linguistic, and sociological monographs upon Indian tribes of the West and Northwest by Dall, Gibbs, Gatschet, Powers, Morgan, Rau, Fletcher, Thomas, Riggs, Dorsey, Holmes. Out of this department under the auspices of Major Powell grew the Bureau of

Ethnology, — later the Bureau of American Ethnology, — whose director he has been since its organization in 1879. On the retirement of Clarence King from the head of the Geological Survey in 1880-1881, Major Powell succeeded him, holding the position till 1896, when he retired. The "Annual Reports of the Bureau of Ethnology" (the first was for 1879-1880), of which the nineteenth and twentieth are now in press, embrace a series of original monographs and studies (chiefly by the members of the staff of the Bureau) of all aspects of American Indian life, languages, arts, institutions, etc., past and present, of unparalleled value for the history of human evolution. To have made possible the publication of the results of the labors of Yarrow, Holden, Royce, Mallery, Dorsey, Gatschet, Cushing, Smith, Henshaw, Matthews, Holmes, Stevenson, Thomas, Dall, MacCauley, Boas, Hoffman, Mooney, Mindeleff, Murdoch, Bourke, Turner, Fowke, Pilling, Nelson, Fewkes, Hewitt, McGee, was an achievement of which one might well be proud. Besides the reports the Bureau of Ethnology published between 1887 and 1894 twenty-four bulletins treating chiefly of American Indian languages and archæology, and including the series of bibliographies of Indian languages compiled by Pilling. Likewise "Introductions," — to the study of Indian languages, by Major Powell; to the study of sign language, by Colonel Mallery, and to the study of mortuary customs, by Dr. Yarrow. Under the headship of Major Powell the Bureau of American Ethnology — Professor W J McGee has been the able ethnologist in charge since 1893 — has done work in anthropology unequalled by any other institution of equal endowment in the world. Nowhere else has the object of the Smithsonian bequest for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among been more amply or more richly accomplished. The monument of Major Powell is the Bureau of American Ethnology, where, in his spirit and with his zeal for the ends he loved, the ablest men of science have labored and will continue to labor to solve the problems given birth to by the presence of the Red Man upon the twin-continent of America. Investigator, teacher, soldier, geologist, anthropologist, philosopher, the genius of the man dwelt within no limited bounds. His individuality, his personal magnetism, his thoroughly scientific frame of mind, impressed themselves upon all with whom he came in contact. To have met him was to keep the memory of a good man and a great. The music of his voice and his remarkable control of the mother-tongue combined to make his public addresses, no less than his private debates, things one rejoiced to hear. With him there has passed from American scientific life a figure unique and rare, whose memory will live as long as men shall honor those who have added to man's knowledge of himself, and saved from perishing the all-too-mutable records of his thoughts, dreams, and deeds.

Honored at home and abroad by many scientific societies, institutions, and universities, Major Powell was also an honorary member of the American Folk-Lore Society, with which he became affiliated at its birth. Much of what he has published belongs in the field of folk-lore, and here, as elsewhere, his thoughts and his words have illumined and stimulated. His works of a more or less folk-lore content are as follows: —

1. Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages. Washington, 1880. Pp. xi + 228.
2. The Evolution of Language. *First Ann. Rep. Bur. of Ethnol.* (1879-1880), pp. 1-16.
3. Sketch of the Mythology of the North American Indians. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-56.
4. Wyandot Government: A Short Study of Tribal Society. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-69.
5. On Limitations to the Use of some Anthropologic Data. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-86.
6. Indian Linguistic Families north of Mexico. *Seventh Ann. Rep. Bur. of Ethnol.* (1885-1886), pp. 1-142.
7. The Three Methods of Evolution. *Bull. Philos. Soc. Wash.*, vol. vi. (1883) pp. xxvii-lii.
8. Human Evolution. *Trans. Anthropol. Soc. Wash.*, vol. ii. (1883) pp. 176-208.
9. From Savagery to Barbarism. *Ibid.*, vol. iii. (1885) pp. 193-196.
10. From Barbarism to Civilization. *Amer. Anthropol.*, vol. i. (1888) pp. 97-123.
11. Competition as a Factor in Human Evolution. *Ibid.*, pp. 297-323.
12. The Nomenclature and the Teaching of Anthropology. *Ibid.*, vol. v. (1892) pp. 266-271.
13. Stone Art in America. *Ibid.*, vol. viii. (1895) pp. 1-7.
14. Seven Venerable Ghosts. *Ibid.*, vol. ix. (1896) pp. 67-91.
15. Evolution of Music from Dance to Symphony. *Proc. A. A. A. S.*, 1889, pp. 1-21.
16. The Interpretation of Folk-Lore. *Journ. Amer. Folk-Lore*, vol. viii. (1895) pp. 97-105.
17. The Evolution of Religion. *Monist* (Chicago), 1898, pp. 183-204.
18. Æsthetology. *Amer. Anthropol.*, N. S. i. (1899) pp. 1-40.
19. The Lessons of Folk-Lore. *Ibid.*, vol. ii. (1900) pp. 1-36.
20. Philology, or the Science of Activities designed for Expression. *Ibid.*, pp. 603-637.
21. Sophiology, or the Science of Activities designed to give Instruction. *Ibid.*, vol. iii. (1901) pp. 51-79.
22. The Categories. *Ibid.*, pp. 404-430.
23. Classification of the Sciences. *Ibid.*, pp. 601-605.
24. Truth and Error (Chicago, 1898).

As an evolutionist, Major Powell emphasized the study of the development of man as man, whose progress, according to his view, could best be represented by the stages of savagery, barbarism, civilization, and enlightenment, with their different correlations in arts, social institutions, language, literature, æsthetics, religion, philosophy. His scheme of the developmental stages of humanity has been more or less generally accepted. Professor W J McGee (*Nat. Geogr. Mag.*, xiii. p. 341) presents it in a somewhat modified form: 1. Unobserved or primordial stage. 2. Sav-

agery, or the warrior stage. 3. Barbarism or the patriarchal stage. 4. Civilization or the monarchical stage. 5. Enlightenment or the stage of citizenship. Major Powell's classification of the linguistic stocks of America north of Mexico is the basis from which all subsequent attempts to classify these American tongues must start. As Professor McGee has pointed out (*Amer. Anthropol.*, N. S. vol. iii. p. 4), he helped to shape in notable fashion the anthropological platform upon which men of science now stand in America.

It is matter for congratulation that the master leaves behind him disciples, like McGee, who are able not only to continue his thought, but to add to it and shape it on the wheel of new-found facts. That Powell was one of the great minds of the present age can hardly be doubted. Nor can any one fear that his work will not be carried on by willing and able successors.<sup>1</sup>

*Alexander F. Chamberlain.*

CLARK UNIVERSITY, WORCESTER, MASS.

#### THOMAS WILSON, 1832-1902.

THOMAS WILSON, curator of the Division of Prehistoric Archæology in the National Museum of Washington, died May 4, 1902, in the seventieth year of his age. His colleague, Professor O. T. Mason, who furnishes an appreciative notice of his career and writings to the "*American Anthropologist*" (*N. S.* vol. iv. 1902, pp. 286-291), writes of him as "an example of American life, — born on a farm, practised in a mechanic's trade, instructed in law, devoted to politics, a soldier, a successful man, a representative of his country abroad, a friend of science."

On both sides of North England ancestry, he was a Pennsylvanian of Quaker lineage, — like Brinton, — an honor to his State and to the faith of his fathers. "Born in sight of a mound," as Professor Mason remarks, "the remains and relics of American aboriginal life were never out of his sight." And when in Europe, he was never very far from the man of the river-drift and the lake-dwelling. Dr. Wilson was by instinct and profession an archæologist, to which branch of anthropology he contributed richly as an investigator, a writer, and a lecturer. He was also a student of folk-lore and a member of the American Folk-Lore Society. Of his monographs the following had more or less to do with folk-lore, and belonged within that field: —

1. The Swastika, the Earliest Known Symbol, and its Migrations. *Rep. U. S. Nat. Mus.*, 1894, pp. 757-1011. With 25 plates and 374 figures.
2. Prehistoric Art. *Ibid.*, 1896, pp. 325-664. With 74 plates and 325 figures.

In his study of the swastika he came to the conclusion that for one use

<sup>1</sup> The writer of these lines has just learned, to his surprise and regret, that Dr. McGee has not been appointed to succeed Major Powell.